

Trail Talk

Conasauga Ranger District

February - March 2008



Dinner time atop Hickory Ridge – Wanda Brown and Amos Burrell take a well deserved break after a strenuous day of trail work on Working Weekend #50.



February – Cold, blustery winter weather didn't keep our TEAM Conasauga volunteers from the woods this month. The **SORBA North GA Chapter** gathered an impressive force to search and destroy blowdowns from nearly 30 miles of the Pinhoti Trail from Dry Creek to Dug Gap on the first day of the month. **SORBA members** included **Chris Hohol, Steve Sharp, Bill Hester, Philip White, Rick Moon, Gennie Dasinger, Conrad Fernandez, Barry Klein, and Larry Vanden Bosch.** **Rodger Atkins** stayed busy several days picking up roadside trash at various locations. The ongoing grade dip construction project on the Hickory Creek Trail was finally completed thanks to **Mary and Bob Korch and Wanda and Troy Brown.** **Rodger Atkins** spent 5 days putting the finishing touches on the reconstructed Johns Mountain Overlook deck and installing barrier posts. **Larry Wheat and Bobby Mitchell** spent two long days at Dry Creek scouting terrain and flagging new trail to be constructed. **Larry Wheat** returned a week later to continue the project. The Jacks River Fields campground was much cleaner after **Melinda Towe and Junior Kyle** maintained the site. **Troy and Wanda Brown** cut blowdowns from the Rice Camp Trail one day, then, cleared trees from the Horseshoe Bend trailhead to the

river the next day. **Larry Wheat** went back to his second home at Dry Creek to continue his trail layout work. **Amos Burrell** built a crosscut saw vice and spent a weekend taking a crosscut saw sharpening class with Forest Service instructor (and former Cohutta volunteer) Carl Deitz. Pinhoti Trail trimming and waterbar maintenance between Stover Creek and Snake Creek Gap was accomplished by **Bill Semsrott and Steve Sharp**. The Strawberry Mountain section of the Pinhoti Trail was the scene of this month's scheduled workday...23 hard-working volunteers made short work of the assigned tasks: dip construction and maintenance, trimming, blowdown removal, and litter pickup. The TEAM members were **Bob Korch, Carole Pinion, Charlie Crider, Christie Neidich, Gail Milner, Janet Jordan, Jeff Krivo, Jim Bishop, Jim Cullen, Kathy Hansen, Larry Jones, Larry Wheat, Mary Korch, Mike Plochinski, Scott Jordan, Sean McHugh, Sherry Neidich, Tom and Tannis Blackwell, Tom Owens, Troy and Wanda Brown, and Zack Jordan**. In addition, **Larry Wheat** spent a morning flagging dip locations in preparation for the February workday before going to Dry Creek to continue his trail route flagging. **Larry Wheat** returned a few days later to spend a full day on trail flagging. The **North GA Chapter of SORBA** organized another big workday on the Pinhoti to tackle blowdown removal and trimming from Snake Creek Gap to Stover Creek. Participants included **Barry Klein, Ben Gaither, Chris Hohol, Conrad Fernandez, Daniel Gaither, Forest Jaquaith, Larry Vanden Bosch, Rick Moon and Steve Sharp**. TEAM Conasauga scored a whopping **519.5 hours** this month...one of the best hourly totals ever for a February. You all are simply amazing!



Larry Wheat and Mike Plochinski construct a grade dip on the Pinhoti Trail –StrawberryMtn.



March – This month saw **Amos Burrell** enjoying the second weekend of his crosscut saw sharpening class in Ocoee, TN. **Bob and Mary Korch** got an early start on our Beech Bottom Trail scheduled workday by maintaining several waterbars. **Larry Wheat** spent a long day flagging a trail route at Dry Creek. He returned the following week for 2 more tough days of scouting and flagging trail. The Iron Mountain Trail got a thorough trail condition survey by **Troy and Wanda Brown**. And, **Larry Wheat** gave his legs another 2-day workout with Dry Creek trail layout. **Rodger Atkins** tore down fire rings at Manning Mill and Dicks Creek and removed litter from 3 roads one day, then returned to perform maintenance at Keown Falls Picnic Area. The tireless **Mr. Atkins** worked Monday through Friday the next week on roadside cleanup and several recreation maintenance projects. **Fred Pilcher** worked with **Rodger** on 3 of those days. **Charlie Crider and Gail Milner** sawed several blowdowns off of the Iron Mountain Trail. The same day, **Richard and Linda Norton and Sherry Neidich** cleared



A family effort... Janet, Zach and Scott Jordan pitch in on the February work day on the Pinhoti Trail at Strawberry Mountain..

blowdowns from the small loop route of the Sumac Creek Trail. **Rodger Atkins and Fred Pilcher** had another very productive week picking up several truck loads of trash along several miles of forest roads and trailheads over a four day period. They also put a coat of stain on the John's Mountain Overlook deck. A steady rain shower didn't slow down a great turnout of volunteers for the March scheduled workday maintaining

waterbars on the Beech Bottom Trail...trail warriors included **Bob**

Korch, Charlie Crider, David Tanner, Gail Milner, Helen Chamberlain, Janet Jordan, Jeff Krivo, Jim Bishop, Larry Jones, Mary Korch, Scott Jordan, Tannis Blackwell, Tom Blackwell, Tom Owens, Troy Brown, Wanda Brown, and Zack Jordan. On the last day of the month, **Fred Pilcher and Rodger Atkins** picked up trash from the Chestnut Mountain Range and the Bowater Road and **Larry Wheat** returned to Dry Creek to continue his trail location work. This month we saw **26 volunteers** contribute **425.25 hours** of their time to the cause. Great effort everyone!



NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

APRIL 27th – May 3rd

Our program is special ... Thanks to YOU!



As the woods begin to “green up”, it is a good time to be on the lookout for the “*Untouchables*”, poison ivy, poison oak and poison sumac. While you can get the rash at any time of year, you are more prone to become infected during the active growing season. Remember that all parts of the plant can cause a reaction...the leaves, stem, hairy vine, and white berries (in fall) should all be avoided. And, just because you have been immune to the plant's effects in the past doesn't mean you will always be immune. Remember...LEAVES OF THREE, LET IT BE.



POISON IVY



POISON OAK



POISON SUMAC

POISON IVY

HOW IT GROWS: Shrub, vine, or small plant

WHERE IT IS:

Everywhere in U.S.A.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE:

Always has three shiny leaves; also greenish-white flowers and clusters of berries

POISON OAK

HOW IT GROWS:

Usually in shrubs, sometimes in vines

WHERE IT IS:

Widespread in California; also in other Western states and Southeast

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE:

Always has three leaves; also greenish-white flowers and clusters of berries

POISON SUMAC

HOW IT GROWS:

As a woody shrub, or a tree ranging from 5 to 25 feet tall

WHERE IT GROWS: Most of the eastern third of the United States

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE:

Branches usually contain nine leaves: four rows of two and one leaf at end

If you make contact with one of these "untouchable" plants and develop a rash, redness, blisters, swelling, burning, or itching:

- Remove contaminated clothing
- Wash affected area of skin with soap and water
- If rash is mild, apply calamine lotion or other soothing lotion
- If reaction is troublesome, or if you have had previous severe reactions in similar situations, seek medical care *immediately*

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THE UNTOUCHABLES



CONASAUGA LORE...

The present East Cowpen Trail follows the old East Cowpen Road, also known as Old Georgia Highway 2, which remained open to vehicle travel until 1987. That road was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCCs). Predating the road built by the CCCs was an old wagon-sled road which tended to follow the crest of the ridge more than the existing trail. Traces of this old roadway can be seen along the ridge crest leading up toward Buckeye Mountain and beyond. This road was so steep and narrow that it is doubtful that it was used much by wagons, but sleds were often used by the mountaineers on such primitive trails. The old road went across Cowpen Mountain to the Rough Ridge and down a ridge between Conasauga Creek and the west fork of Jacks River, which ridge is known as the Old Wagon Road Ridge. The road led out to the Jones Settlement community.



* Historical information provided by Shepherd L. Howell



Conasauga Bits and Pieces

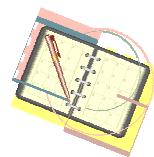
OPENING DATES

Pocket Campground.....April 4
Lake Conasauga Campground.....April 18
Jacks River trout fishing season.....March 29
Conasauga River trout fishing with natural baits.....March 29
Turkey season, Cohutta WMA.....March 22-May 15
Turkey season, Johns Mountain WMA...March 22-April 4 (Quota hunt)
April 5-May 15 (general hunt)

May 24 **Campsite Rehab, Lower Jacks River Trail**

June 7 **National Trails Day - To be announced**

July 19 **To be announced**



Note: In addition to these scheduled workdays, we are trying to gather some folks to continue ongoing projects, such as the waterbar work on the Beech Bottom Trail and blowdown removal on Hickory Ridge Trail. If you are interested, please contact Larry Thomas, phone 706-695-6736 x103 or e-mail lrthomas@fs.fed.us.



Happy Trails to You